

Document Review Checklist and Non-Regulatory Guidance for Non-Public Schools Comprehensive Site Visit

Preparing for the On-site Visit

Documents may be submitted in an electronic format to either a Google site or on a flash drive. Documentation pertaining to all document review items (electronic or hard copy) should be made available in the site visit team's designated workroom (as applicable) for review during the site visit. It is expected the documentation be organized by using notebooks, folders, or other means coded by the item numbers/letters listed (e.g., 1a and 1b) in a way that is efficient for the district and easy to follow by team members.

All Accreditation Requirements Versus Items Reviewed During the Visit

Chapter 12 of Iowa Administrative Code contains the accreditation requirements for schools and school districts. Although all requirements contained within Chapter 12 are not specifically monitored during the on-site visit process, this does not absolve the LEA from addressing these items. **It is the responsibility of LEA leadership to assure ALL accreditation requirements are met on an ongoing basis. If the site visit team becomes aware of areas of Chapter 12 non-compliance regarding issues not contained on this checklist, these items will be included within the citations contained in the site visit report.** For additional guidance, the LEA is advised to obtain a copy of the [Chapter 12 Rule Interpretation Matrix](#) from the Department of Education website.

Other Documents for Site Visit Team

- Building-level school improvement plans, if applicable
- Examples/copies of data reviewed/analyzed by the SIAC when forming recommendations regarding major educational needs, student learning goals, long-term goals, and harassment or bullying prevention goals, programs, training, and other initiatives
- Student achievement data for areas in addition to reading, mathematics, and science, if available
- Trendline data from school-wide assessments (other than Iowa Tests)
- ACT trendline data, if available/applicable
- Data regarding the percentage of students participating in extracurricular and co-curricular activities, if available
- School curriculum materials, including content standards, benchmarks, grade level indicators, and curriculum maps for all available curricular areas
- High school course handbook/registration guide (if applicable)
- Staff, parent, and student handbooks
- Surveys conducted within the last five years
- ELL/Lau Plan

Desk Audit: Items for Electronic Submission

1. Board adopted policies that address the following content:

Guidance:

If a school uses Diocesan (or similar) policies, care should be taken to "localize" the content to assure alignment with school practices.

- _____ a. Accessibility (**SR7**) and confidentiality (**SR8**) of student records in compliance with *FERPA* (34 CFR §99), *Iowa Code Chapter 22*, and *281—IAC 12.3(4)*

Guidance:

FERPA requirements can be accessed online at: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>. Specific requirements regarding the documentation required for requests and disclosures of student record information is contained in 34 CFR §99.32.

_____ b. Graduation requirements (**GR1**) 281—IAC 12.3(5)

Note:

School policy must be consistent with requirements contained in 281—IAC 12.5(5), which state “Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year graduating class, all students in schools and school districts shall satisfactorily complete at least four units of English and language arts, three units of mathematics, three units of science, three units of social studies, and one full unit of physical education as conditions of graduation. The three units of social studies may include the existing graduation requirements of one-half unit of United States government and one unit of United States history.

_____ c. Policy prohibiting harassment and bullying of or by students, staff, and volunteers (**RD1.4**) which is based on actual or perceived age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status and which creates an objectively hostile school environment (**HBP1**). 281—IAC 12.3(13), *Iowa Code 280.28(3) and 729A.1*

Guidance:

Harassment and bullying is construed to mean any electronic, written, verbal, or physical act related to the specified traits or characteristics stated above. The local board policy must contain all of these 17 traits or characteristics, but does not need to be limited to these 17. Policy must include procedures for reporting, procedures for the prompt investigation of complaints, identify an investigator, and include a statement of the manner in which the policy will be publicized.

IASB sample policy 104 updated 2015

_____ d. Schools that receive federal E-rate funds (all schools in Iowa) - Internet appropriate use policy with these provisions: (**IAUP1**) *Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA)*
_____ 1. Monitoring the online activities of students including provisions regarding training students about appropriate online behavior, including interaction on social networking sites and chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response. (**IAUP2**)

_____ e. Policy to insure that students are free from discriminatory practices in the educational program (MC/GF policy) (**MCGF1**) 281—IAC 12.5(8)

Guidance:

Multicultural (MC) approaches to the educational program are defined as those with foster knowledge of, and rest and appreciation for, the historical and contemporary contributions of diverse cultural groups, including race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, and socioeconomic background. The contributions and perspectives of Asian Americans, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, American Indians, European Americans, and persons with disabilities.

Gender fair (GF) approaches to the educational program are defined as approaches which foster knowledge of, and respect and appreciation for, the historical and contemporary contributions of women and men to society. The program shall reflect the wide variety of roles open to both women and men and which provide equal opportunity to both sexes.

2. School calendar

- _____ a. Indicates 180 days of instruction (**CL5**) or 1080 hours of instruction 256.7(19)
_____ b. Seniors have 175 days scheduled in the calendar (**CL8**) no more than 5 days or 30 hours less

- _____ c. Each school day consists of at least 6 hours of instructional time unless otherwise allowed per House File 2170 (**MD1**)

Evidence:

- a copy of the school calendar
- the daily starting and ending times for each attendance center
- the last day of classes for seniors

For further guidance visit the Iowa Department of Education website at:

<https://www.educateiowa.gov/instructional-hours-vs-days-updates>

Guidance:

12.1(9) A school day, for those utilizing a school calendar based on days, shall consist of a minimum of 6 hours of instructional time for all grades 1 through 12. The minimum hours shall exclude the lunch period. Passing time between classes may be counted as part of the 6-hour requirement.

12.1(8) (b) For schools or school districts adopting a calendar based on a 1,080-hour minimum schedule, an official hour of school is an hour in which the school or school district is in session and students are under the guidance and instruction of the instructional professional staff. For purposes of this rule, an “hour” is defined as 60 minutes. The calculation of minimum hours shall exclude the lunch period. Passing time between classes may be counted as part of the hour requirement. School shall be considered in session during parent-teacher conferences as well as during activities such as field trips if students are engaged in programs or activities under the guidance and direction of the instructional professional staff. All grade levels of the school or school district must be operated and available for attendance by all students. Schools or school districts have flexibility on how they can reach the threshold of 1,080 hours of instruction but must keep annual documentation of how they met that standard. The school calendar may include more than or less than or may equal the 180-day schedule. The hours included in an individual day under an hours format may vary.

3. Documentation (e.g., meeting agendas/minutes) regarding the School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC) provides evidence of the following:

- _____ a. A board appointed SIAC exists (**SIAC1**). 281—IAC 12.8(1)(a)(2)

Evidence:

Board minutes showing appointment of the SIAC should be provided.

Guidance:

Chapter 12 does not require that the SIAC be appointed annually; however, each time membership changes (including student representative), board action is required.

- _____ b. Membership includes students, parents, teachers, administrators, and representatives from the local community (**SIAC2**). To the extent possible, committee membership has balanced representation of the following: race, gender, national origin, and disability (**SIAC6**). 281—IAC 12.2

Evidence:

A list of SIAC members indicating the required membership representation should be provided.

Guidance:

Schools are advised to maintain documentation of efforts to seek membership representation with regard to gender, race, national origin, and disability. Current administrative rules state, “[t]o the extent possible, committee membership shall have balanced representation with regard to race, gender, national origin, and disability.” However, Iowa Code 69.16A, as amended in 2009, places a strict gender balance requirement, effective January 1, 2012, for “all appointive boards, commissions, committees, and councils of a political subdivision of the state that are established by the Code, if not otherwise provided by law.” This requirement, which applies to the SIAC, defines gender balance as half male and half female for even-numbered committees or half plus one for odd-numbered committees.

- _____ c. At least annually (**SIAC3**), the SIAC makes recommendations to board with regard to progress achieved with annual improvement goals for the state indicators that address reading, mathematics, and science, progress achieved with other locally determined

indicators, and annual improvement goals for the state indicators that address reading, mathematics, and science **(SIAC4)**. 281—IAC 12.8(1)(a)(3)

Evidence:

SIAC recommendations to the board should be reflected on board agenda(s) and/or within meeting minutes. Provide a copy of the most recent recommendations addressing the required content that has been presented to the Board.

Guidance:

281—IAC 12.8(1)(a)(2) also sets the SIAC's responsibility for analyzing needs assessment data to make recommendations to the board regarding major educational needs, student learning goals, long-term goals, and harassment or bullying prevention goals, programs, training, and other initiatives. Maintaining a summary of the information reviewed by the SIAC and recommendations made to the board regarding these areas is recommended (see the Additional Reference Documents for Site Visit Team section). Providing evidence of recommendations from multiple years is encouraged as it would help assure they are made annually.

- _____ d. Based on the committee members' analysis of the needs assessment data, they shall make recommendations to the board about the following components:
1. Major educational needs;
 2. Student learning goals;
 3. Long-range goals that include, but are not limited to, the state indicators that address reading, mathematics, and science achievement; and
 4. Harassment or bullying prevention goals, programs, training, and other initiatives.
- (SIAC5)** 281—IAC 12.8(1)(a)(2)

Evidence:

Presentation of the SIAC's recommendations to the board should be reflected on board agenda(s) and/or within meeting minutes. Provide a copy of the most recent recommendations addressing the required content that has been presented to the board. (The four components do not need to be addressed annually, but evidence of these components being addressed is required.)

Guidance:

What processes the school or school district used to obtain recommendations from the advisory committee for the board with regard to components #1-4 in rule is locally determined.

281—IAC Chapter 12: General Accreditation: Items for Review (Electronic or hard copy on site)
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4. Attendance center, program, and course enrollment data demonstrating the following:
- _____ a. Attendance center and course enrollment data, disaggregated by gender, racial/ethnic background, and disability **(EQ4)** are reviewed annually **(EQ3)**. 281—IAC 12.1(1)

Evidence:

The school must provide the following:

- a summary of attendance center, program, and course enrollment-related trends noted over the past three years; and
- a description of how these data are collected and used, with what frequency, by whom, and for what purposes.

The intent is to provide greater clarity regarding how the school is addressing the "reviewed annually" requirement.

Guidance:

Schools and school districts shall collect and annually review attendance center, and course enrollment data. Gender segregation, racial isolation, and disability isolation do not constitute a violation of law in and of themselves. When these conditions exist, the district is required to do a review of its policies and practices to ensure that they are not contributing to isolation, to segregation, or to the denial of access to universal instruction for subgroups of students. In addition, steps must be taken by counselors and teachers to recruit students into the course, the program, or the activity.

- _____ b. Equal opportunity in programs is provided to all students regardless of race, color, national origin, gender (sex), sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, socioeconomic status, disability, religion, or creed (**EQ5**). 281—IAC 12.1(1) and Iowa Code 280.3

Evidence:

The school must provide the following:

- board policy regarding student access to educational programs

Guidance for schools:

Nothing in 281—IAC 12.1(1) shall be construed as prohibiting any bona fide religious institution from imposing qualifications based upon religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity when such qualifications are related to a bona fide religious purpose.

For further guidance, visit the Iowa Department of Education website - [Equity Guidance](#) webinar

Related IASB Sample Policies: 102, 102.E4, 102.E5, 102.E6, 102.R1 all updated 2015

5. _____ The board policy manual provides evidence policies are reviewed at least every five years (**PM3**). 281—IAC 12.3(2)

Evidence:

Provide a copy of the board policy manual (or directions for electronic access).

Guidance:

While many schools include the adoption, review, and revision dates on each individual policy, it is not required. These dates might appear on a separate page, such as an index page for each policy series.

6. Elementary program, grades 1-6 (**EPRO1**). 281—IAC 12.5(3)
Documentation (i.e., master schedule) that show(s) the following areas are taught in grades 1-6.
Note: These areas do not have to be separate courses, but they must be taught in each of the grades. The number of minutes dedicated to each area is a local decision.
- _____ a. Health
_____ b. Physical education
_____ c. Music
_____ d. Visual art

Evidence:

Master schedules for each grade (1-6) should be provided. Each schedule should be clearly labeled to indicate the grade level. If a required subject area is not specified on the master schedule (e.g., Health), evidence of where the concepts are taught (in EACH grade, 1-6) should be provided. For example, if Health content is integrated into science and/or physical education instruction, this information should be provided to the team. This could be done by identifying the content specifications for the content areas in question within the school's curriculum documents (e.g., standards/benchmarks).

Guidance:

The health content area is often a difficult area to verify as the required concepts are commonly integrated into other subject areas, such as physical education and science. Care must be taken to assure all subject areas are included in each grade, 1-6. 281—IAC 12.5(3)(a)-(i) contains the list of content specifications for each elementary program subject area. If health is integrated into other subjects, download the [matrix](#), complete to indicate content specifications.

7. Junior high program, grades 7 and 8 (**JHP1**). 281—IAC 12.5(4)
Documentation (i.e., master schedule) that show(s) the following areas are taught in grades 7 and 8.
Note: These areas do not have to be separate courses, but they must be taught in each of the grades. Note: The number of minutes dedicated to each area is a local decision.
- _____ a. Health
_____ b. Physical education
_____ c. Music
_____ d. Visual art

Evidence:

Master schedules for each grade (7-8) should be provided. If a required subject area is not specified on the master schedule (e.g., Health), evidence of where the concepts are taught (in EACH grade) should be provided. For example, if health content is integrated into science and/or physical education instruction, this information should be provided. This could be done by identifying the content specifications for the content area in question within the district's curriculum documents (e.g., standards/benchmarks), or use a matrix. 281—IAC 12.5(4)(a)-(h) Content specifications for junior high health are included in this [matrix](#). Download the matrix if needed, complete to indicate content specifications, upload document.

8. High school program, grades 9-12 (**HSP1**). 281—IAC 12.5
Documentation (i.e., master schedule) that show(s) the following units of instruction are taught in grades 9-12.

Evidence:

The high school master schedule [for each semester](#) should be provided.

Guidance:

A "unit of instruction" is a course that is taught for at least 200 minutes per week for 36 weeks or for the equivalent of 120 hours of instruction. With "regular" scheduling, a year-long course is normally the equivalent of one unit of instruction. A semester-length course is normally the equivalent of ½ unit of instruction. With block scheduling, a "block-length" course taught for one semester is usually the equivalent of one unit. The same course taught in two different semesters does not count as two separate partial or full units of instruction. Courses offered through concurrent enrollment CANNOT be used to meet a school's minimum program requirements (exception: Career and Technical Education).

_____ a. English-language arts, six units (**HSPELA2**) 281—IAC 12.5(5)(a)

_____ b. Social studies, five units (**HSPSS2**) 281—IAC 12.5(5)(b)

Guidance:

All students in grades 9-12 must, as a condition of graduation, complete a minimum of one-half unit of United States government, one unit of United States history, and receive instruction in the government of Iowa.

_____ c. Mathematics, six units 281—IAC 12.5(5)(c)

_____ 1. Four sequential units preparatory to postsecondary educational programs (**HSPM2**) 281—IAC 12.5(5)(c)

_____ 2. Two additional units (**HSPM3**) 281—IAC 12.5(5)(c)

_____ d. Science, five units 281—IAC 12.5(5)(d) (**HSPS2**)

_____ 1. Full unit of Chemistry (**HSPS3**) 281—IAC 12.5(5)(d)

_____ 2. Full unit of Physics (**HSPS4**) 281—IAC 12.5(5)(d)

Evidence:

Full units of chemistry and physics shall be taught but may be offered in alternate years. If the school's practice is to offer these subjects on an alternate year basis, master schedules for at least two consecutive years should be provided.

_____ e. Health, one unit (**HSPH2**) 281—IAC 12.5(5)(e)

Guidance:

It is not uncommon to find a one-semester (1/2 unit) health course (e.g., Health I) offered each semester. This would not meet the "offer and teach" requirement.

_____ f. Physical education, one unit (**HSPPE2**) 281—IAC 12.5(5)(f)

_____ 1. A minimum of 1/8 unit of PE is offered and taught each semester (**HSPPE3**)
281—IAC 12.5(5)(f)

Guidance:

All physically able students shall be required to participate in the program for a minimum of 1/8 unit each semester they are enrolled except as otherwise provided in 281—IAC 12.5(5)(f). 1/8 unit equates to 900 minutes (50 minutes per week over an 18 week semester). If the school is not providing physical education during each term (semester) and does not have a Department approved physical education waiver, the school is out of compliance. There is no requirement that physical education be taught each period of the day.

- _____ g. Fine arts, three units (**HSPFA2**) 281—IAC 12.5(5)(g)
 - _____ 1. Fine arts instruction includes at least two of the following: dance, music, theater, and visual arts (**HSPFA3**) 281—IAC 12.5(5)(g)
- _____ h. Foreign language, four units (**HSPFL2**) 281—IAC 12.5(5)(h)

Guidance:

The foreign language program shall be a four-unit sequence of uninterrupted study in at least one language. All high schools shall offer and teach the first two units of the sequence. The third and fourth units must be offered. However, the Department of Education may, on an annual basis, waive the third and fourth unit requirements upon the request of the board.

If the school is not teaching the third and/or fourth year of a foreign language and does not have a Department - approved foreign language waiver, the school is out of compliance (**HSPFL3**).

- _____ i. Vocational education (career and technical education), five units (**VEN1**) 281—IAC 12.5(5)(j)

Guidance:

The school must offer and teach five units of occupational education subjects, but there is broad discretion as to the kinds of subjects to offer. 281—IAC 15.5(5)(j) states that the subjects “may include, but are not limited to programs, services, and activities which prepare students for employment in business or office occupations, trade and industrial occupations, consumer and family sciences or home economics occupations, agricultural occupations, marketing occupations, and health occupations.

Instruction shall be competency-based and articulated with postsecondary programs of study. The school may meet the articulation requirement either directly with a post-secondary program or through a sharing agreement with a public district that includes career and technical education articulation agreements.

- 9. Physical activity requirement 281—IAC 12.5(19)
 - _____ a. Documentation that pupils are being provided support to complete the physical activity requirement (**PA4**) 281—IAC 12.5(19)(d)

Evidence:

Evidence might include printed schedules, school policies, student handbooks, and similar means.

Guidance:

Pupils in kindergarten through grade 5 must engage in physical activity for a minimum of 30 minutes each school day. Pupils in grades 6 through 12 must engage in physical activity for a minimum of 120 minutes per week in which there are at least five days of school.

- 10. Cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) course.

- _____ a. The school or school district has a documented process through which students' cardiopulmonary resuscitation requirements are met and verified. (**CPR1**) 281—IAC 12.5(20)

Evidence:

Evidence might include printed schedules, district policies, student handbooks, student transcripts, student course rosters, or similar means.

Guidance:

Subject to the provisions of subrule 12.5(6), at any time prior to the end of twelfth grade, every pupil physically able to do so shall have completed a psychomotor course that leads to certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Schools may accept proof that a student has completed CPR outside of school. If a school or

school district provides the training during the school day, the school or school district may bring in any person from the community or elsewhere who is certified to teach CPR if no one on staff has this certification. A school or school district shall not accept auditing of a CPR course, nor a course in infant CPR only.

11. Documentation regarding implementation of the Professional Development Plan.

Preparation/Evidence:

The items for this section will be reviewed to ensure connection between current practice and the content approved in the school's CSIP section of C-Plan. If the professional development plan has changed since the school's CSIP was last approved, the school is asked to provide the rationale for this decision.

Documentation for item 11 a-b could include school and/or building professional development plans, action plans, meeting agendas/minutes, professional development calendars, and implementation logs/data summaries. One document could provide evidence for several requirements.

General Guidance:

A document entitled "[Iowa Professional Development Model Technical Guide](#)" is available for download from the DE website.

- _____ a. To meet the needs of instructional staff (**PD1**), professional development activities:
 - _____ 1. align with school achievement goals (**PD6.1**) 281—IAC 12.7(2)(a)
 - _____ 2. are based on student achievement needs (**PD2**) and staff needs (**PD3**) 281—IAC 12.7(2)(a)
 - _____ 3. deliver research-based instructional practices (**PD5.1**) 281—IAC 12.7(2)(a)
- _____ b. The Board annually budgets specified funds to implement the professional development plan (**PDB1**) 281—IAC 12.7(2)(b)

Evidence:

If the school line item budget includes professional development, provide a copy. If not, provide a listing of expenses associated with implementation of the professional development program.

Information or Documents Accessible Only to the Site Visit Team Leader

12. Personnel files for all staff members (**RPL1**) 281—IAC 12.4(11)

- _____ a. Personnel files for all non-instructional professional staff, as defined in 281—IAC 12.4(2), contain legal license/certificate or statement of professional recognition (**LEF3**)

Evidence:

Licenses for school nurses (RN), bus drivers (if the school provides its own transportation [CDL or Chauffeur's Class D3 license, Medical Examiner's Certificate, and School Bus Driver's Authorization card]), educational sign language interpreters/translators, and coaching certificates for non-teaching coaches should be on file. A random sample of non-instructional professional staff personnel files will be reviewed. This requirement applies to full and part-time staff.

13. _____ The system of maintaining student permanent records (**SR1**) provides evidence of attendance (**SR10**) and educational progress (**SR11**). 281—IAC 12.3(4)

- _____ a. Student permanent records are stored in a fire-resistant safe/vault or maintained and stored electronically with a secure backup file (**SR3**). 281—IAC 12.3(4)

Evidence:

Attendance and educational progress information should reflect the date the student entered the school and the date the student left as a result of graduation, dropping out, and/or moving. Record of educational progress (i.e., grades) should be evident from the date the student entered through the date they exited the school.

Guidance:

The school is required to adopt a policy regarding accessibility and confidentiality of student records in compliance with FERPA (34 CFR §99) (see item #1a). It is the school's responsibility to ensure this policy is publicized and enforced.

14. _____ The system of maintaining student cumulative records (**SR2**) provides a continuous and current record of significant information on student progress and growth (**SR12**).
281—IAC 12.3(4)

Evidence:

Continuous and current student records should be evident for each student currently enrolled in the school. Cumulative records can be maintained electronically as long as access to these records is available to the appropriate individuals (e.g., teachers with legitimate educational need).

Guidance:

“Continuous and current record” implies information in the files (e.g., grades) should be included from the time the student entered the school (and prior information as applicable). As such, a check of student files at the highest level served by the school (e.g., high school) usually provides sufficient evidence of maintenance of cumulative files at other levels.

<p>Desk Audit: Items Available Without Additional Submission Items Reviewed Off-Site by Team Leader</p>

15. _____ Evidence reviewed in Fall BEDS verifies all teachers are endorsed/certified for the appropriate grade level (**TL1**) 281—IAC 12.4(8)
16. _____ Evidence reviewed in Fall BEDS verifies all teachers are endorsed/certified for the appropriate content area (**TL2**) 281—IAC 12.4(8)
17. _____ Evidence reviewed in Fall BEDS verifies administrators are endorsed/certified for the appropriately (**PR1**) 281—IAC 12.4(7)
18. _____ Evidence reviewed in Fall BEDS verifies superintendent holds the proper endorsement license/certificate (**SPT2**) 281—IAC 12.4(4)

It is the policy of the Iowa Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code sections 216.9 and 256.10(2), Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d and 2000e), the Equal Pay Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 206, *et seq.*), Title IX (Educational Amendments, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 – 1688), Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, *et seq.*).

If you have questions or complaints related to compliance with this policy by the Iowa Department of Education, please contact the legal counsel for the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, telephone number 515/281-5295, or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Citigroup Center, 500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1475, Chicago, IL 60661-7204, Telephone: (312) 730-1560, Facsimile: (312) 730-1576, [Email: OCR.Chicago@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Chicago@ed.gov)